

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

MID-PACIFIC REGION

**SOUTH-CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AREA OFFICE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA**

Draft FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**WIND WARNING LIGHT UPGRADE
AT SAN LUIS RESERVOIR STATE RECREATION AREA**

FONSI-08-12

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at San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that the approval of the retrofit of four existing wind warning light (WWL) systems and the installation of one new WWL at San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area (SLRSRA) is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an environmental impact statement is not required. This Finding of No Significant Impact is supported by Reclamation's Environmental Assessment (EA) Number EA-08-12, *Wind Warning Light Upgrade at San Luis Reservoir State Recreation Area*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

Reclamation proposes to approve the retrofit of four existing WWL systems and the installation of one new WWL system at SLRSRA. Additionally, as part of the project, three kit fox dens with chambers would be installed. CDPR agrees to maintain these kit fox dens and to not apply pesticides at the wind warning sites.

The WWLs would be located at SLR and O'Neill Forebay as proposed by CDPR and Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW).

At San Luis Reservoir the following is proposed:

- Upgrade light at the Romero Visitor's Center on the north side of the reservoir
- Basalt area light would be remounted and new concrete pad installed

At O'Neill Forebay the following is proposed:

- A light near the San Luis Creek water treatment plant would be upgraded with a new tower and light and new supporting concrete pad
- The Medeiros area would be upgraded with a new tower and light and new concrete pad
- A new WWL system, including concrete pad, tower and light would be added on the west side of the O'Neill Forebay north of the San Luis Creek north of the Group Camps

DBW is funding the project as it would enhance the safety of boating on the reservoir by upgrading with new lights that would provide greater visibility and warning ability to the boaters. This project would upgrade the current lights to Hali-Brite lights which would enhance visibility and forewarning to boaters over greater distances.

FINDINGS

Biological Resources: Effects from the project will be the anticipated loss of approximately 0.019 acres of disturbed introduced annual grassland habitat adjacent to existing paved or earthen roads accessing existing recreation and safety facilities. Approximately 0.012 acres will be lost permanently.

Direct take could occur from strikes by heavy equipment or collisions with construction vehicles. This effect is not likely to occur because construction work on the project will be limited to daylight

hours and because the construction sites are in areas with relatively high human use and activity, which are likely less attractive to SJKF than more isolated areas of SLRSRA. Additionally, standard kit fox avoidance measures are being implemented, and these include speed limits on construction vehicles, which would minimize the chance a SJKF could be struck.

Direct and indirect effects to SJKF may occur from the loss of habitat. The small loss of grassland habitat (less than two-one hundredths of an acre) could reduce the foraging area for SJKF in the immediate term, but also will, over time, effectively reduce the amount of habitat available to support this species. The loss of the small amount of habitat will be mitigated, however, by the installation of the dens for kit fox. The dens will provide habitat features in the landscape that are limiting and should enhance the ability of SJKF to move safely through the landscape around O'Neill Forebay. The dens also should enhance the suitability of the surrounding grassland habitat by providing refugia from predators that are common in the region.

Due to the small area impacted and the limited use of SJKF in the area, the impacts to biological resources would not be significant.

Cultural Resources: Reclamation has made a determination that the Proposed Action has no potential to affect historic properties pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800.3(a)(1), therefore no additional consideration under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is required.

Recreation: Upgrading the existing WWL and adding the new WWL would improve visibility and coverage of the WWL safety alert system. Boating over the period 2000 to 2003 has increased substantially at various ramps, increasing from 16 percent to 709 percent depending on the launch site. Overall boat launches have almost tripled, going up from 12,106 per year to 29,657 per year. With more boaters on the reservoirs, a more visible WWL system with more coverage would provide greater protection to boaters. Although the boating opportunity at SLRSRA will be improved it is unlikely that this improvement will affect the overall level of recreation. Therefore there will be no impact to recreation.

Indian Trust Assets: There are no tribes possessing legal property interests held in trust by the United States in the action area for these alternatives. The nearest Indian trust assets to this action are located at the about 27 miles away. This action would have no effect on ITAs.

Socioeconomic Resources: The public is likely to be unaware of the shortcomings of the WWL system at the reservoirs. Upgrading the WWLs is unlikely to attract boaters. The tourism brought to the surrounding area would not be affected.

Environmental Justice: The Proposed Action would not cause dislocation, changes in employment, or increase flood, drought, or disease. The Proposed Action would not disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged or minority populations. There would be no changes to existing conditions. Employment opportunities for low-income wage earners and minority population groups would be within historical conditions. Disadvantaged populations would not be subject to disproportionate impacts.

Cumulative Impacts: The Proposed Action, when added to other past, present, and future actions does not result in significant impacts to biological resources and would have no impact on cultural,

recreation or socioeconomic resources. Neither Indian Trust Assets nor disadvantaged or minority populations would be impacted.

Within the vicinity of the action area, future state, local, or private actions are most likely to affect SJKF through the loss and degradation of habitat as a result of urbanization and road and utility right-of-way expansion, through direct effects related to construction, and indirect effects associated with increased traffic and unregulated use of occupied habitat by people and their pets. Much urbanization may depend on water from federal source, in which case completion of a Section 7 consultation with Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, or the Federal Highway Administration could occur. In the absence of a Section 7 consultation with a federal agency, a Section 10 consultation would be expected.

Cumulative effects that would affect SJKF include primarily effects stemming from urban growth in the region. Associated with this growth, there may be increased chance for take from poisoning from illegal use of rodent control baits, illegal hunting, increased vehicle strikes and increased disturbance from human activities. Countywide the loss of less than 0.02 acres has no effect on SJKF. Overall there would be no cumulative impacts due to this Proposed Action.